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## LIFE'S GOLDEN AGE.

ALL the world has shrunk since the Golden Age of our childhood. Time was longer, and people were taller then. A wet day was the depth of despair and the end of all things; the hours also were longer, and a year from January to December lapsed slowly by, like the prehistoric ages. The future seemed to be bringing a measureless succession of such years until the gigantic height of grown-up people would be reached; but life was so long, it was hardly worth while to think about the mystery of growing to their height at last. Our old home has shrunk since those days; the rooms are smaller and darker; the streets, once familiar, would be narrower if we could see them now; the garden has shrunk too; the trees have been growing down; and the church spire is stumpy, as if Time had pushed its top lower, like a shutting telescope. Beyond the home circle who were part of our existence, the grown-up people of the Golden Age were a mysterious race. They cared no more for games or playthings; though we refused to believe that any length of years would make us cease to care for hide-and-seek among the gorse and the billows of fern, and for the mustering of tin armies or the acquisition of new toys. Not only were the grown-up people in a dried-up state of indifference to games and plays, but they actually laughed at things that were not in the least funny. They never cried; they never ran; they did not ask for pudding twice, though they might have it; they had learned all possible lessons long ago, and had managed to remember them for the rest of their lives, and they knew all about everything always.

But oh, the green world of those days! Have the green lanes since wound on through golden light and moving leaf-shadows? Have the corn-fields been so broad beyond the hedges, such a sea of warm and breeze-swept yellow ripeness, flecked all along near the hedge-path with sparkling blue, and with blazing red poppies?

Have the skies been so far away since, where the lark sang out of sight, and where, with our head on the grass, we made upward voyages among the towering white clouds in the clearness of breezy summer days? Have the summers burned the dusty roads so white? And has the milk been so sweet within sight of the sheds at a doorway under thatched eaves? Is the noon-tide stillness of the hot country, the siesta of the birds, as deep as it was then? Is the scent of the honeysuckle as strong, and the smell of the hay? Are there bright beetles in the hay-field yet, and are butterflies becoming extinct, compared with their old numbers? Is it possible to have hay-battles, now that there seem to be so many painful stubble-fields to traverse in this world of ours? Who will give us back the heart-thrill of our first sight of the mountains? Who will remind us of the actual refreshment of wading in the shallow sunny brook, or swinging over it from ropes tied to white-blossomed trees? Who will send us another song like our first hearing of the noise of the great unresting sea, or another sight like the first vision of its foam-fringed, sky-bounded, sun-dazzled waters? When the moon shone on the water then, one longed to look all night; when the winter stars were out, there was no pageant like the heaven of heavens. In that Golden Age the world might have been created and called good but yesterday, so new a world it was. We saw

The earth and every common sight  
Apparelled in celestial light,  
The glory and the freshness of a dream.

But the glory and the freshness were in ourselves. Wordsworth calls it the hour 'of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower.' Not all the splendour has departed; the sun of those days and the light of our first love are still lingering in the sunlight of to-day. George Eliot tells us how a forest of young golden-brown oak branches with the light gleaming through, and with ground-ivy and blue speedwell

and white star-flowers below, is more beautiful to the heart than all the grandeur of tropical forests, because it holds 'the subtle inextricable associations the fleeting hours of our childhood had left behind them. Our delight in the sunshine or the deep-bladed grass might be no more than the faint perception of wearied souls, if it were not for the sunshine and the grass in the far-off years which still live in us, and transform our perception into love.'

A yearning for that Golden Age of life has come in earnest moments to half the world ; the poets have sighed for it ; and one of the sweetest songs that tell of saddest thought became a favourite long ago because it told how, in gathering shells on the beach,

A dream came o'er me like a spell—  
I thought I was again a child.

Now, why is childhood called the happiest time of life? And if it be life's Golden Age, why cannot we keep the gold?

The reasons why that period is envied seem to be these: First, and most subtly underlying all envy of childhood, is the knowledge that it is the time when we have our whole life before us. Often it is not the return of the state itself that is desired, but its anticipation of a life which we feel to be swift and short, and of a past which is irrevocable. Not to be children again, but to have our chance again, is the wish underlying most of the yearning. Apart from this, there are many other reasons. We may place as the second, the freedom of childhood from responsibility and care ; and next, its freshness and its habitual joy ; and last, but very far from least, the atmosphere of loving service, kindness, and tenderness which surrounds that helpless period. Of course, we are speaking of childhood under favourable circumstances ; no one, except, perhaps, a dying man, would envy the beginning of life in extreme poverty or in loveless hardship.

Other reasons there are for looking back tenderly to that Golden Age: it was the time when we possessed unconsciously all the spiritual beauty that we recognise now as the inner charm of little children. They walk in the paradise of an unfallen world ; their simplicity is their greatest attraction ; their faith and trust in those that care for and provide for them is absolutely perfect ; without any words, they know that the home-love will last ; without taking thought, they expect to-morrow to be cared for like to-day. Lastly, they love much, and from the first love they receive, their life takes vigour and colour. They are like young plants straining to the light, and enriched according to their share of warmth and sunshine.

But there is to the Golden Age another side. It is not perfection ; it is not entirely happy. How imperfect it is, all of us know, and the flaws on the surface are not the saddest ; in fact, without some of these, we should hardly recognise our human fellow-mortals, or we should doubt that we knew them well. A great educator in his day was wont to say that he dreaded receiving a boy whom the parents presented with pride as faultless ; he dreaded that the faults were within, ready to break out as childhood disappeared. But all lovers of children will acknowledge the

manifold imperfection that is a part of their being ; and perhaps we should not love them so well if it was not craving our sympathetic care. Again, this Golden Age is not an entirely happy time. It is true that the outbursts of sobbing are forgotten sooner than we can forget our sorrows ; but the sobs were real while they lasted. As George Eliot says, this anguish appears very trivial to weather-worn mortals, who have to think about Christmas bills, dead loves, and broken friendships ; but it may be not less bitter, perhaps it is even more bitter, than later troubles. 'We can no longer recall the poignancy of that moment and weep over it, as we do over the remembered sorrows of five or ten years ago. Surely, if we could recall that early bitterness and the dim guesses, the strangely perspectiveless conception of life that gave the bitterness its intensity, we should not pooh-pooh the griefs of children.'

So we have decided that the Golden Age is not perfect—anything but it! And it is far from being entirely happy. There is another consideration to be taken into account—what happiness we possessed in childhood we did not understand or value. We had that 'strangely perspectiveless view of life' which prevented us from enjoying our happiness as we enjoy it now, when we know its value better, through experience and through a wider view of the world. The want of a perspective to their world gives to children's grief its intensity ; they cannot look beyond ; they cannot understand its passing away. But it also gives to joys their shallowness ; and there are manifold meanings in the saying, that unless we have suffered we cannot rejoice. Therefore, in sighing for life's Golden Age again, the sigh means a wish, not for childhood as childhood is, but for childhood with the added consciousness and experience of after-years. To have freedom from care, and to know what a burden care can be ; to have freshness, and to know what *ennui* means ; to have habitual joyousness, after learning how anxiety can wear the spirit out of life ; to have love and wisdom watching over one, as if one was what a child is to a mother's heart, 'the unconscious centre and poise of the universe' ; and at the same time to know the worth of such wisdom and love ; to have our life all before us, conscious of what life is and how short are the years ; to find again the Eden garden, innocent of evil, after having seen how evil fills the world with misery ; to be simple, after having found out the charm and the wisdom of simplicity ; to have—in a word—not childhood as it is, but as it would be, if we with our present knowledge could begin again :—this is what is wished for. This, too, is the secret of the sympathetic touch in Gray's well-known welcome of the breeze from the school of his boyhood, that breeze that came from the happy hills, the fields beloved in vain :

I feel the gales that from ye blow  
A momentary bliss bestow,  
As waving fresh their gladsome wing,  
My weary soul they seem to soothie,  
And, redolent of joy and youth,  
To breathe a second spring.

That second spring would be boyhood with manhood's knowledge—an impossible existence, a Golden Age that never was. It was because

of the grim troop of passions and diseases waiting 'in the vale below,' that Gray envied the boyhood that had not yet advanced to meet the strife and miseries of the world. We call that Golden Age 'the happiest time,' merely by contrast; we forget its small capacity for happiness, its shallow understanding of the worth of those good things that we envy; and we apostrophise it in poetry and prose, because we are condemning the after-time as unhappy, without remembering our increased capacity for happiness.

But if it be impossible to carry back to a new start in life the experience life has given us, while we are thinking with a sad fascination of that Golden Age, and feeling the 'momentary bliss' of recollection, we shall not find it impossible to reverse our aspirations, and to combine with later life some part, and perhaps the best part, of our young life's treasures. We yearn for those two things together—the happiness of the beginning, and the light upon it from the experience of the end. We cannot go back; but why should we not gather again and bring forward with us all that can be brought from the Golden Age? Then, to some extent, our aspirations will be satisfied.

Out of that Golden Age all the best things can be picked up and carried along with us still. Surely this is some comfort to us wayfarers who must 'move on!' We cannot have life over again; but it can be made to lengthen in worth by intensity of purpose, and of working, of loving. These, and not time, are the true measure of life. We envy freedom from responsibility; the child has his tasks as we have ours; his lesson may be as hard as our duty, and harder; he is happily resigned to tasks in obedience to the will of others; our buckling down to duty will bring us our playtime too. Freshness comes next. Wordsworth, after mourning that the glory and the dream were gone, acknowledged that he could receive from the meanest flower thoughts too deep for tears; so we strongly suspect that the glory and the dream were remaining, and that he saw till the last the earth 'apparelled in celestial light.' The love of the open-air world of beauty is a great key to lifelong freshness of soul. Another key to freshness is the custom of being easily pleased. The smallest gift pleases a child; in later life, we look more at the love of the giver than at the gift; but why should not the manifold growth of small kindnesses refresh us? And how shall we get habitual joy? It is a precious treasure; the home is rich where there is one member of the household brimful of sunshine. A merry word at home is magic for brightening life; and it is some encouragement to know that of all social virtues, the habit of joyousness is the one that grows fastest by patient effort. It fosters another childlike treasure—the sense of delight in a home atmosphere of love. Let us not fear to express our tenderness in word and deed for those who share life's burdens with us, and the glow of the Golden Age will be round the hearth again. As for simplicity, it is already the lifelong dower of many of the most gifted minds; it is almost a characteristic of the intellectual men of noblest life. Why should we use long words when short ones are

kinder; why go roundabout ways when we only need openly do our best? Wonderful as it may seem, simplicity is the most imitable part of childhood. The absence of self-consciousness is the grand key to it. If we cease thinking about the effect produced upon others, who are supposed to have concentrated their attention upon our puny selves, we shall escape much heartburning, and gradually begin to brighten our path with something of childhood's brightness. As for faith and trust, if they look higher than the roof of home, why should they not be as the child's huge trust? We should have fewer careworn looks, and the habit of joy would be easier.

There is another quality that must crown this development of the childlike character—it is sympathy—that wide and warm sympathy which knows no growing old, and which is the fruition of our childhood's eager freshness. Best of all, in picking up those old treasures that we carelessly dropped by the way when the Golden Age was ending, we may yet be, all unconsciously, very near the paradise-garden where once we walked, not knowing our good-fortune, and but half able to enjoy it.

## IN ALL SHADES.

## CHAPTER VIII.

FOR a few minutes, they stood looking blankly at one another in mute astonishment, turning over and comparing the two telegrams together with undecided minds; then at last Nora broke the silence. 'I tell you what it is,' she said, with an air of profound wisdom; 'they must have got an epidemic of yellow fever over in Trinidad—they're always having it, you know, and nobody minds it, unless of course they die of it, and even then I daresay they don't think much about it. But papa and Mr Hawthorn must be afraid that if we come out now, fresh from England, we may all of us get it.'

Edward looked once more at the telegrams very dubiously. 'I don't think that'll do, Miss Dupuy,' he said, after re-reading them with a legal scrutiny. 'You see, your father says: "On no account go on board the *Severn*." Evidently, it's this particular ship he has an objection to; and perhaps my father's objection may be exactly the same. It's very singular—very mysterious!'

'Do you think,' Marian suggested, 'there can be anything wrong with the vessel or the machinery? You know, they *do* say, Edward, that some ship-owners send ships to sea that aren't at all safe or seaworthy. I read such a dreadful article about it a little while ago in one of the papers. Perhaps they think the *Severn* may go to the bottom.'

'Or else that there's dynamite on board,' Nora put in; 'or a clockwork thing like the one somebody was going to blow up that steamer with at Hamburg, once, you remember! Oh, my dear, the bare idea of it makes me quite shudder! Fancy being blown out of your berth, at dead of night, into the nasty cold stormy water, and having a shark bite you in two across the waist before you were really well awake,

and had begun properly to realise the situation!'

'Not very likely, either of them,' Edward said. 'This is a new ship, one of the very best on the line, and perfectly safe, except of course in a hurricane, when anything on earth is liable to go down; so that can't possibly be Mr Dupuy's objection to the *Severn*.—And as to the clockwork, you know, Nora, the people who put those things on board steamers, if there are any, don't telegraph out to give warning beforehand to the friends of passengers on the other side of the Atlantic. No; for my part, I can't at all understand it. It's a perfect mystery to me, and I give it up entirely.'

'Well, what do you mean to do, dear?' Marian asked anxiously. 'Go back at once, or go on in spite of it?'

'I don't think there's any choice left us now, darling. The ship's fairly under weigh, you see; and nothing on earth would induce them to stop her, once she's started, till we get to Trinidad, or at least to St Thomas.'

'You don't mean to say, Mr Hawthorn,' Nora cried piteously, 'they'll carry us on now to the end of the journey, whether we want to stop or whether we don't?'

'Yes, I do, Miss Dupuy. They will, most certainly. I suspect they've got no voice themselves in the matter. A mail-steamer is under contract to sail from a given port on a given day, and not to stop for anything on earth, except fire or stress of weather, till she lands the mails safely on the other side, according to agreement.'

'Well, that's a blessing anyhow!' Nora said resignedly; 'because, if so, it saves us the trouble of thinking anything more about the matter; and papa can't be angry with me for having sailed, if the captain refuses to send us back, now we've once fairly started. Indeed, for my part, I'm very glad of it, to tell you the truth, because it would have been such a horrid nuisance to have to go on shore again and unpack all one's things just for a fortnight, after all the fuss and hurry we've had already about getting them finished. What a pity the bothering old telegrams came at all to keep us in suspense the whole way over!'

'But suppose there *is* some dynamite on board,' Marian suggested timidly. 'Don't you think, Edward, you'd better go and ask the captain?'

'I'll go and ask the captain, by all means, if that's any relief to you,' Edward answered; 'but I don't think it likely he can throw any particular light of his own upon the reason of the telegrams.'

The captain, being shortly found on the bridge, came down at his leisure and inspected the messages; hummed and hawed a little dubiously; smiled to himself with much good-humour; said it was a confoundedly odd coincidence; and looked somehow as though he saw the meaning of the two telegrams at once, but wasn't anxious to impart his knowledge to any inquiring third party. 'Yellow fever!' he said, shrugging his shoulders sailor-wise, when Edward mentioned Nora's first suggestion. 'No, no; don't you believe it. Tain't yellow fever. Why, nobody who lives in the West Indies ever thinks anything of that, bless you. Besides, you wouldn't

get it; don't you trouble your head about it. You ain't the sort or the build to get it. Men of your temperament never do ketch yellow fever—it don't affect 'em. No, no; it ain't that, you take my word for it.'

Marian gently hinted at unseaworthiness; but at this the good captain laughed quite unceremoniously. 'Go down!' he cried—'go down, indeed! I'd like to see the hurricane that'd send the *Severn* spinning to the bottom. No, no; we may get hurricanes, of course—though this isn't the month for them. The rhyme says: "June—too soon; July—stand by; Au-gust—you must; September—remember; October—all over." Still, in the course of nature we're likely enough to have some ugly weather—a capful of wind or so, I mean—nothing to speak of, for a ship of her tonnage. But I'll bet you a bottle of champagne the hurricane's not alive that'll ever send the *Severn* to the bottom, and I'll pay it you (if I lose) at the first port the lifeboat puts into after the accident.—Dynamite! clockwork! that's all gammon, my dear ma'am, that is! The ship's as good a ship as ever sailed the Bay o' Biscay, and there's nothing aboard her more explosive than the bottle of champagne I hope you'll drink this evening for dinner.'

'Then we can't be put out?' Nora asked, with her most beseeching smile.

'My dear lady, not if. I knew you were the Queen of England. Once we're off, we're off in earnest, and nothing on earth can ever stop us till we get safely across to St Thomas—the hand of God, the perils of the sea, and the Queen's enemies alone excepted,' the captain added, quoting with a smile the stereotyped formula of the bills of lading.

'What do you think the telegram means, then?' Nora asked again, a little relieved by this confident assurance.

The captain once more hummed and hawed, and bit his nails, and looked very awkward. 'Well,' he said slowly, after a minute's internal debate, 'perhaps—perhaps the niggers over yonder may be getting troublesome, you know; and your family may think it an inopportune time for you or Mr and Mrs Hawthorn to visit the colony.—All right, Jones, I'm coming in a minute.—You must excuse me, ladies. In sight of land, a cap'n ought always to be at his post on the bridge. See you at dinner.—Good-morning, good-morning.'

'It seems to me, Edward,' Marian said, as he retreated opportunely, 'the captain knows a good deal more about it than he wants to tell us. He was trying to hide something from us; I'm quite sure he was.—Aren't you, Nora? I do hope there's nothing wrong with the steamer or the machinery!'

'I didn't notice anything peculiar about him myself,' Edward answered, with a little hesitation. 'However, it's certainly very singular. But as we've got to go on, we may as well go on as confidently as possible, and think as little as we can about it. The mystery will all be cleared up as soon as we get across to Trinidad.'

'If we ever get there!' Nora said, half-jesting, and half in earnest.

As she spoke, Dr Whitaker the mulatto passed

close by, pacing up and down the quarter-deck for exercise, to get his sea-legs ; and as he passed her, he turned his eyes once more mutely upon her with that rapid, timid, quickly shifting glance, the exact opposite of a stare, which yet speaks more certainly than anything else can do an instinctive admiration. Nora's face flushed again, at least as much with annoyance as with self-consciousness. 'That horrid man !' she cried petulantly, with a little angry dash of her hand, almost before he was well out of earshot. 'How on earth can he have the impertinence to go and look at me in that way, I wonder !'

'Oh, don't, dear !' Marian whispered, genuinely alarmed lest the mulatto should overhear her. 'You oughtn't to speak like that, you know. Of course one feels at once a sort of natural shrinking from black people—one can't help that, I know—it seems to be innate in one. But one oughtn't to let them see it themselves at any rate. Respect their feelings, Nora, do, dear, for my sake, I beg of you.'

'Oh, it's all very well for you, Marian,' Nora answered, quite aloud, and strumming on the deck with her parasol ; 'but for my part, you know, if there's anything on earth that I can't endure, it's a brown man.'

## CHAPTER IX.

All the way across to St Thomas, endless speculations as to the meaning of the two mysterious telegrams afforded the three passengers chiefly concerned an unusual fund of conversation and plot-interest for an entire voyage. Still, after a while the subject palled a little ; and on the second evening out, in calm and beautiful summer twilight weather, they were all sitting in their own folding-chairs on the after-deck, positively free from any doubts or guesses upon the important question, and solely engaged in making the acquaintance of their fellow-passengers. By-and-by, as the shades began to close in, there was little sound of persuasive language—as when one asks a young lady to sing—at the stern end of the swiftly moving vessel ; and then, in a few minutes, somebody in the dusk took a small violin out of a wooden case and began to play a piece of Spohr's. The ladies turned around their chairs to face the musician, and listened carelessly as he went through the preliminary scraping and twanging which seems to be inseparable from the very nature of the violin as an instrument. Presently, having tightened the pegs to his own perfect satisfaction, the player began to draw his bow rapidly and surely across the strings with the unerring confidence of a practised performer. In two minutes, the hum of conversation had ceased on deck, and all the little world of the *Severn* was bending forward its head eagerly to catch the liquid notes that floated with such delicious clearness upon the quiet breathless evening air. Instinctively everybody recognised at once the obvious fact that the man in the stern to whom they were all listening was an accomplished and admirable violin-player.

Just at first, the thing that Marian and Nora noticed most in the stranger's playing was his extraordinary brilliancy and certainty of execution. He was a perfect master of the *technique*

of his instrument, that was evident. But after a few minutes more, they began to perceive that he was something much more than merely that ; he played not only with consummate skill, but also with infinite grace, insight, and tenderness. As they listened, they could feel the man outpouring his whole soul in the exquisite modulations of his passionate music : it was not any cold, well-drilled, mechanical accuracy of touch alone ; it was the loving hand of a born musician, wholly in harmony with the master he interpreted, the work he realised, and the strings on which he gave it vocal utterance. As he finished the piece, Edward whispered in a hushed voice to Nora : 'He plays beautifully.' And Nora answered, with a sudden burst of womanly enthusiasm : 'More than beautifully—exquisitely, divinely.'

'You'll sing us something, won't you ?'—'Oh, do sing us something !'—'Monsieur will not refuse us !'—'Ah, señor, it is such a great pleasure.' So a little babel of two or three languages urged at once upon the unknown figure silhouetted dark at the stern of the steamer against the paling sunset ; and after a short pause, the unknown figure complied graciously, bowing its acknowledgments to the surrounding company, and burst out into a song in a glorious rich tenor voice, almost the finest Nora and Marian had ever listened to.

'English !' Nora whispered in a soft tone, as the first few words fell upon their ears distinctly, uttered without any mouthing in a plain unmistakable native tone. 'I'm quite surprised at it ! I made up my mind, from the intense sort of way he played the violin, that he must be a Spaniard or an Italian, or at least a South American. English people seldom play with all that depth and earnestness and fervour.'

'Hush, hush !' Marian answered under her breath. 'Don't talk while he's singing, please, Nora—it's too delicious.'

They listened till the song was quite finished, and the last echo of that magnificent voice had died away upon the surface of the still, moonlit waters ; and then Nora said eagerly to Edward : 'Oh, do find out who he is, Mr Hawthorn ! Do go and get to know him ! I want so to be introduced to him ! What a glorious singer ! and what a splendid violinist ! I never in my life heard anything lovelier, even at the opera.'

Edward smiled, and dived at once into the little crowd at the end of the quarter-deck, in search of the unknown and nameless musician. Nora waited impatiently in her seat to see who the mysterious personage could be. In a few seconds, Edward came back again, bringing with him the admired performer. 'Miss Dupuy was so very anxious to make your acquaintance,' he said, as he drew the supposed stranger forward, 'on the strength of your beautiful playing and singing.—You see, Miss Dupuy, it's a fellow-passenger to whom we've already introduced ourselves—Dr Whitaker !'

Nora drew back almost imperceptibly at this sudden revelation. In the dusk and from a little distance, she had not recognised their acquaintance of yesterday. But it was indeed the mulatto doctor. However, now she was fairly trapped ; and having thus let herself in for the young man's society for that particular evening,

she had good sense and good feeling enough not to let him see, at least too obtrusively, that she did not desire the pleasure of his further acquaintance. To be sure, she spoke as little and as coldly as she could to him, in such ordinary phrases of polite admiration as she felt were called for under these painful circumstances; but she tried to temper her enthusiasm down to the proper point of chilliness for a clever and well-taught mulatto fiddler.—He had been a 'marvellous violinist' in her own mind five minutes before; but as he turned out to be of brown blood, she felt now that 'clever fiddler' was quite good enough for the altered occasion.

Dr Whitaker, however, remained in happy unconsciousness of Nora's sudden change of attitude. He drew over a camp-stool from near the gunwale and seated himself upon it just in front of the little group in their folding ship-chairs. 'I'm so glad you liked my playing, Miss Dupuy,' he said quietly, turning towards Nora. 'Music always sounds at its best on the water in the evening. And that's such a lovely piece—my pet piece—so much feeling and pathos and delicate melody in it. Not like most of Spohr: a very unusual work for him; he's so often wanting, you know, in the sense of melody.'

'You play charmingly,' Nora answered, in a languid chilly voice. 'Your song and your playing have given us a great treat, I'm sure, Dr Whitaker.'

'Where have you studied?' Marian asked hastily, feeling that Nora was not showing so deep an interest in the subject as was naturally expected of her. 'Have you taken lessons in Germany or Italy?'

'A few,' the mulatto doctor replied with a little sigh, 'though not so many as I could have wished. My great ambition would have been to study regularly at the Conservatoire. But I never could gratify my wish in that respect, and I learned most of my fiddling by myself at Edinburgh.'

'You're an Edinburgh University man, I suppose?' Edward put in.

'Yes, an Edinburgh University man. The medical course there, you know, attracts so many men who would like better, in other respects, to go to one of the English universities.—You're Cambridge yourself, I think, Mr Hawthorn, aren't you?'

'Yes, Cambridge.'

The mulatto sighed again. 'A lovely place!' he said—'a most delicious place, Cambridge. I spent a charming week there once myself. The calm repose of those grand old avenues behind John's and Trinity delighted me immensely.—A place to sit in and compose symphonies, Mrs Hawthorn. Nothing that I've seen in England so greatly impressed me with the idea of the grand antiquity of the country—the vast historical background of civilisation, century behind century, and generation behind generation—as that beautiful mingled picture of venerable elms, and mouldering architecture, and close-cropped green-sward at the backs of the colleges. The very grass had a wonderful look of antique culture. I asked the gardener in one of the courts of Trinity how they ever got such velvety carpets for their smooth quadrangles, and the answer the

fellow gave me was itself redolent of the traditions of the place. "We rolls 'em and mows 'em, sir," he said, "and we mows 'em and rolls 'em, for a thousand years."

'What a pity you couldn't have stopped there and composed symphonies, as you liked it so much,' Nora remarked, with hardly concealed sarcasm—'only then, of course, we shouldn't have had the pleasure of hearing you play your violin so beautifully on the *Severn* this evening.'

Dr Whitaker looked up at her quickly with a piercing look. 'Yes,' he replied; 'it is a pity, for I should have dearly loved it. I'm bound up in music, almost; it's one of my two great passions. But I had more than one reason for feeling that I ought, if possible, to go back to Trinidad. The first is, that I think every West Indian, and especially every man of my colour—he said it out quite naturally, simply, and unaffectedly, without pausing or hesitating—who has been to Europe for his education, owes it to his country to come back again, and do his best in raising its social, intellectual, and artistic level.'

'I'm very glad to hear you say so,' Edward replied. 'I think so myself too, and I'm pleased to find you agree with me in the matter.—And your second reason?'

'Well, I thought my colour might stand in my way in practice in England—very naturally, I'm not surprised at it; while in Trinidad I might be able to do a great deal of good and find a great many patients amongst my own people.'

'But I'm afraid they won't be able to pay you, you know,' Nora interposed. 'The poor black people always expect to be doctored for nothing.'

Dr Whitaker turned upon her a puzzled pair of simple, honest, open eyes, whose curious glance of mute inquiry could be easily observed even in the dim moonlight. 'I don't think of practising for money,' he said simply, as if it were the most ordinary statement in the world. 'My father has happily means enough to enable me to live without the necessity for earning a livelihood. I want to be of some use in my generation, and to help my own people, if possible, to rise a little in the scale of humanity. I shall practise gratuitously among the poorest negroes, and do what I can to raise and better their unhappy condition.'

**'UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER' GRANT.**  
THE 27th of April 1822 was a great day in Point Pleasant, a little pioneer settlement on the banks of the Ohio; for Jesse Grant's wife presented him that day with a boy, and newcomers were rare in the little place. Every detail about the latest arrival was eagerly and quickly circulated; and if the men of the little town had learned in some mysterious way what Jesse Grant's boy was afterwards to become, they could hardly have made more stir about him. But Jesse and his wife could not hit upon a name for their firstborn, and six weeks after his birth his only name was 'Baby.' A family council was held to settle the knotty question, and it was decided to ballot for a name! Each person present wrote the name he or she favoured on

a slip of paper, and the slips were shaken up in a hat. The first drawn slip was to name the boy, and as it bore the name Ulysses, Ulysses was fixed on. But the ballot was not allowed to rule supreme, for the name of an honoured ancestor was added to the choice of the ballot; and the future President of the United States, and general of its armies, was christened as Hiram Ulysses Grant, a name that he lost by an accident in after-years.

Jesse Grant was a man of many parts, and not only conducted a tannery, but also—to quote Mr Thayer's description of him in the interesting life of General Grant, to which we are indebted for the following incidents of his career (*From Tanyard to White House*, by W. M. Thayer. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1885)—'In addition to tanning, he ran a slaughter-house, did something at teaming, and occasionally erected a building for other parties.' In a house where so many irons were in the fire, it will readily be understood there were no idlers, and Ulysses had early to take his share of the work. A passionate love of horses, that time only strengthened, was the outcome of his early acquaintance with them. At school he was famed only for a wonderful gift for mathematics, and a stern obstinacy that often carried him through a task in which a cleverer boy failed. One day a schoolmate declared of Grant, when a peculiarly difficult problem was under discussion: 'His forte is in arithmetic, and he will dig away until he has got it; but I can't do it!'—'Can't! can't!' responded Grant quizzically. 'What does that mean?' And away he rushed to the teacher's desk to examine the dictionary. The boys looked on silently, awaiting to see what was afoot. 'Can't!' exclaimed Ulysses; 'there's no such word in the dictionary,' as he closed the volume. 'It can be done.'

There was little in this obstinate determined youngster to foreshadow his great future, and it was with no small astonishment that his neighbours heard a phrenologist's verdict on the lad. Let Mr Thayer tell the story: 'After the lecturer had been blindfolded, a gentleman set Ulysses in the chair. The lecturer proceeded to examine his head, and continued so long without saying a word, that a citizen inquired "Do you discover any special ability for mathematics in that boy's head?"—"Mathematics!" retorted the lecturer, as if that kind of ability did not cover the case. "You need not be surprised if this boy is President of the United States some day!"' How far this judgment accorded with that of the audience, we may gather from Mr Thayer's naive comment, that 'it did not increase the reputation of the phrenologist in Mount Pleasant.'

Young Grant's love of horses was a great hindrance to his progress at school. Ever more ready to go afield with the teams than to take his place in class, it is little wonder that, with the many opportunities for indulging his propensities which his father's business afforded him, he did not achieve any marked success. As a child of seven he harnessed a young colt that had never before been harnessed, though, from his diminutive stature, he had to stand on an inverted corn-measure to fix the bridle. At nine, he astonished his father by asking if he might buy a horse—to be his own. He had saved enough money to buy

a colt, and was anxious to have one. 'But there is risk in buying a horse,' his father reminded him. 'And I am willing to take the risk, father.' And he did—and from that day was never without a horse. This willingness to take risks was a keynote of Grant's character, and many of his after-successes were due to it.

Schooldays over, Ulysses served for a while in his father's tanyard; but he took a violent aversion to the business, and an equally strong craving for 'an education.' It was probably this desire for education, rather than any keen thirst for military life or glory, that caused him to seek admission to West Point—the Sandhurst of the United States—where a good general education was added to the necessary military course at little or no cost to the student. Each Congressional district was entitled to one student in the college, and application for the vacant cadetship of their district was made to their member by Jesse Grant on behalf of his son. The busy man made inquiries, and then, without referring to the father's letter, claimed the appointment for 'Ulysses Simpson Grant'; and in this name Ulysses entered, and thus lost by accident the name he had gained by ballot.

On entering West Point, each student was required to deposit sixty dollars to guarantee the expenses of his return home, in the event of his failing to pass the entrance examination. Ulysses broke his journey to spend a short time with some relatives in Philadelphia before proceeding to West Point. City life so charmed him that when his visit came to an end and he was due at the college, nearly all his money—including his sixty dollars—was gone. Nothing daunted, Ulysses presented himself for admission, and met the demand for his deposit with the calm reply: 'I intend to pass the examination!' He was allowed to sit, and passed easily, and in due course was graduated as second lieutenant in 1843.

His first appointment was at Jefferson Barracks, near St Louis. Here it was that he met his future wife, wooed and, in spite of the opposition of her parents, who thought their daughter might look higher than the poor second lieutenant, won her. The Mexican war gave Lieutenant Grant his first taste of warfare. Several times he was mentioned in the despatches for distinguished services; and for bravery he was appointed First Lieutenant. Congress proposed to confirm the temporary rank, but he declined, preferring, he said, 'to reach the position by regular gradations of service.'

In 1848, Grant, now Captain, and an honoured hero of the Mexican war, married. Six happy years were spent with his regiment, and then, in 1854, he resigned his position, to take to farming. 'Whoever hears of me in ten years' time,' he told a comrade, 'will hear of a well-to-do old Missouri farmer.' But in ten years' time he was Commander-in-chief of the United States armies! The farming did not pay; a partnership in a land agency that succeeded it, did little better; and then the Captain joined his brothers in a leather business at Galena, Illinois. It was here that the news of the assault on his country's flag by the rebels reached him.

The Confederates had attacked Fort Sumner on April 12, 1861, and from end to end of the land, the heart of the loyal States was stirred by the

tidings. Grant was no politician ; indeed, he disliked and shunned party strife ; but he felt in this news of his country's danger, the call of duty. 'I left the army expecting never to return,' he said. 'I am no seeker for position ; but the country which educated me is in sore peril, and as a man of honour, I feel bound to offer my services for whatever they are worth.' Accordingly, he volunteered ; but in the crowd of place-hunters at the State capital, the retiring, self-distrustful Captain was passed by. All the Illinois regiments were provided with commanders, and in despair of obtaining any appointment, Grant had actually left the capital to visit his father, when he received a telegram from the governor of the State : 'You are this day appointed Colonel of the Twenty-first Illinois Volunteers, and requested to take command at once.' The former commander of the regiment had been dismissed for incompetency, and the governor had asked one of Grant's friends, 'What kind of man is this Captain Grant ?' Though anxious to serve, he seems reluctant to take any high position. He even declined my offer to recommend him to Washington for a brigadier-generalship, saying he didn't want office till he had earned it. What does he want ?' 'The way to deal with him,' was the reply, 'is to ask him no questions, but simply order him to duty. He will promptly obey.' This man knew Grant !

Well might governor Yates exclaim, as he is reported to have done in after-years : 'It was the most glorious day of my life when I signed Grant's commission.' For, as Mr Thayer well puts it, 'Grant had found his place. From that he would go forth "from conquering to conquer." ' Two months later, he was Brigadier-general—this time he felt he had *earned* the post—and from this point his advance was rapid. Before the end of the war, the disused ranks of Lieutenant-general, and General, of the United States army were revived and conferred on him. Through the mazes of that long struggle we need not follow him, but incident after incident of that awful war show the grand simplicity and true nobility of his nature. As a commander, determined to the point of obstinacy, resolute of purpose, and daring in action—in private, modest, retiring almost to a fault, and living a sober, upright life, against which inveterate foes could bring no charge but the most groundless tissue of calumnies—all this was 'Unconditional Surrender' Grant.

The very title was characteristic of the man—'Unconditional Surrender' Grant ! It arose from the closing scene of the attack on Fort Donelson. The Confederate General Buckner asked for terms, and Grant thus replied to the demand : 'Yours of this date proposing armistice, and appointment of Commissioners to settle terms of capitulation, is just received. No terms except an unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted. I propose to move immediately on your works.' Buckner surrendered.

This stern determination, though perhaps the ruling feature of Grant's character, did not shut out other noble qualities. Before Vicksburg, he found that his men faltered in the spade-work under the heavy fire. The General took a seat near them amid a very hail of shot, and quickly reassured them by calmly whittling a stick

through it all ! At another time, when a battle was in progress, the General sent one of his staff on some errand ; the officer asked Grant where he should find him on his return. The answer showed the stuff the general was made of : 'Probably at headquarters. If you don't, come to the front, wherever you hear the heaviest firing !'

'When do you expect to take Vicksburg ?' a rebel woman tauntingly asked the General. 'I can't tell exactly,' was the calm reply ; 'but I shall stay until I do, if it takes thirty years.' And take it he did, as all the world knows. There is a singular likeness in this reply to the 'unconditional surrender' of Fort Donelson, and to the still more famous declaration before Richmond, after six consecutive days' fighting, unparalleled in modern times : 'I propose to fight it out on this line, if it takes all summer.'

Yet, in spite of his deep-rooted determination to crush the rebellion, Grant could show a consideration for the feelings of his vanquished foes that with a man of smaller calibre would have been impossible. 'After the surrender of General Lee,' Mr Thayer tells us, 'the Union army began to salute Grant by firing cannon. He directed the firing to cease at once, saying : "It will wound the feelings of our prisoners, who have become our countrymen again." ' It was this spirit of consideration and conciliation that, in no small degree, served to make union possible again between North and South.

Of course, Grant did not escape calumny—what great man ever did ?—but he bore the unfounded charges brought against him without a murmur, silencing not a few by the contempt with which he treated them. 'When I have done the best I can,' he said once, 'I leave it.' But the calumnies brought against him were as nothing to the tide of honours that burst upon him as soon as the value of his services became apparent. Even before the war was ended, he was, or might have been, the best fitted man in the Union. But his whole nature revolted at the idea. When he was appointed Lieutenant-general, he was ordered to repair to Washington to receive his commission from the President. Mrs Lincoln proposed to give a grand military dinner in his honour. But Grant pleaded that his presence was needed on the field, and begged to be excused. 'I do not see how we can excuse you,' Mrs Lincoln urged ; 'it would be Hamlet with the Prince left out.' The reply shows the man in all the rugged simplicity of his grand nature : 'I appreciate fully all the honour Mrs Lincoln would do me ; but time is precious ; and really, Mr President, I have had enough of the show business !'

But the 'show business' was only beginning ; and no sooner was the war at an end, than honours fell thick and fast on the hero of the long struggle. Office, wealth, and power were all within his grasp, and at the nation's call he took them up, and right wisely did he use them. Twice he served in the highest and proudest office an American citizen can hold ; and at the expiration of his second term of office in 1876, he set out on a long-desired trip round the world. How he was received with more than kingly honour the wide-world over, is within the memory of all. His entry to a city was the signal for a burst

of enthusiastic welcome, and everywhere he was feted to the utmost of the people's power. On every hand he was met by the call for speeches, and speech-making he thoroughly detested ; yet the few clear, concise sentences, bristling with shrewd common-sense, and overflowing with genuine feeling, to which he confined his remarks, will long be remembered by those who heard them.

'Although a soldier by education and profession,' he told the citizens of London, 'I have never felt any sort of fondness for war, and I have never advocated it except as a means of peace.' And again, to Prince Bismarck he made a somewhat similar remark : 'I never went into the army without regret, and never retired without pleasure !'

Through Europe, and home by India, Siam, China, and Japan, went the General and his party, welcomed and feted everywhere. The long tour came to an end at San Francisco, on September 20, 1879, and the journey thence to the Eastern States was one long triumphal progress. The General took up his residence in New York, and though an abortive attempt was made to secure his return for a third time to the White House in 1880, he took little or no further share of public life. His fortune he invested in a business in which his son was partner with a man named Ward, and in the downfall of this concern, the General lost his all. With unflinching courage, he faced the situation, conscious though he was of the formation of that dread cancer in the throat that in the end proved too strong for him. Magazines were willing to pay large prices for articles from his pen, and publishers eager to issue his autobiography. So, with a brave heart, the General set himself to fight his last battle.

The news of his terrible position soon became known, and a public subscription was proposed, that would quickly have restored Grant to more than his former wealth ; but he would have none of it. Congress, greatly to his delight, placed him on the retired list of the army. 'They have brought us back our old commander,' said Mrs Grant when she heard the news. But it was not for long. On the 23d of July 1885, the battle came to an end, and 'Unconditional Surrender Grant' gave in at last to the great conqueror of all.

### A GOLDEN ARGOSY.

A NOVELETTE.

CHAPTER XIL

IMAGINE a man paying forty thousand pounds into the Bank of England, and learning to-morrow that that stupendous financial concern had stopped payment ! Imagine Lady Clara Vere de Vere discovering her wonderful *parure*, with its European renown, to be paste ! Imagine the feelings of Thomas Carlyle when the carelessness of John Stuart Mill destroyed the labour of years ! Imagine poor Euclid's state of mind when his wife burnt his books ! In short, imagine, each of you, the greatest calamity you can think of, and you will have some faint

notion of the feelings of the quartet in Mr Carver's office at Mr Bates's disconcerting discovery.

For a few minutes, silence reigned supreme, and then Edgar commenced to whistle. It was not a particularly cheerful air, but it sufficed to arouse the others from their stupefaction.

'If I had not been an infatuated old idiot,' said Mr Carver, hurling the unfortunate volume of romance with unnecessary violence across the room, 'I should have foreseen this ;' and murmuring something about strait-waistcoats and the thick-headedness of society in general, he lapsed into gloomy silence.

Mr Bates regarded his chief in mild disapproval. Such an ebullition of feeling by no means accorded with his views of professional etiquette ; besides, he had a feeling that his discovery had not been treated in a proper and business-like manner. 'Hem !' said that gentleman, clearing his throat gently—'hem ! If I may be allowed to make a remark—apologising to you, sir—Mr Carver nodded with dark meaning—and taking upon myself to make a suggestion : might it not be possible that where the money is, a will may be concealed also ?'

The party ceased to contemplate space, and a ray of hope quivered on the gloomy horizon for a moment. Mr Carver, however, eyed his clerk with an air of indignation blended with resigned sorrow. 'I suppose, Bates, every man has moments of incipient insanity,' he said in accents of the most scathing sarcasm. 'You, I perceive, are only mortal. I should be sorry to imagine you to have arrived at the worst stage ; but I may be allowed, I think, to point out to you one little fact. Do you for one moment suppose that a man who is idiot enough to bury his treasure in this manner, has enough sense remaining to make a will ?' and Mr Carver looked at his subordinate with the air of a man who has made his great point and confounded his adversary.

'I do not agree with you, sir,' retorted Bates mildly. 'A gentleman who has brains enough to carry out such a scheme as this, was not likely to forget a vital part. You are generally sharp enough to see a point like this. What with romances and games of marbles, hem ! and such other trifolios, business seems quite forgotten !'

It was curious to note with what eagerness the parties most interested hung upon the clerk's words.

'Bates, Bates ! I never thought it would come to this,' returned the pseudo-justice, shaking his head in more sorrow than anger. 'A man still in the prime of life and to talk like this ! Poor fellow, poor fellow !'

'Well, sir, you may doubt, and of course you have a right to your own opinion ; but we shall see.'

'See, Bates ! how can we see ?' exclaimed the lawyer. 'Is not this treasure buried upon Miss Wakefield's property, and are we likely to get an order to search that property ?—O yes, of course—returning to the sarcastic mode—'Miss Wakefield is so gentle, so amiable, so sweet, and unsuspecting !—Bates, I am ashamed of you !'

The imperturbable Bates shrugged his shoulders slightly and resumed his writing. So far as

he was concerned, the matter was done with ; but he knew the character of his superior sufficiently to know that the words he had said would take root, for, sooth to say, Mr Carver laid considerable weight upon his junior's acumen, though, between the twain, such an idea was tacitly ignored.

During the above interesting dialogue, Mr Slimm had been eyeing the antagonists with a smile of placid amusement. That wily gentleman was rather taken with Bates's argument. 'Seems to me,' he said, 'the advantage is not all on one side. The honoured mistress of Eastwood, the lady whom our friend'—pointing to Mr Carver—'has spoken of in such eulogistic terms, is no better off than we are. She has the property where the money is concealed, and, as far as we know now, it belongs to her. Any movement on our side will be sufficient to arouse her suspicions. Providing the money is found, as I have before said, as far as we know, it belongs to her. It is scarcely worth while going to the trouble and expense of unearthing this wealth for her. So far, she has the bulge on us. On the other hand, we know where the money is. She does not, and there we have the bulge on her.'

'And what is your proposition?' Mr Carver inquired.

'Arbitration,' replied the American. 'There is only one thing to do, and that is compromise. Even supposing our friends only get half, surely that is better than nothing. It's the easiest thing in the world. All you have to do is to say to the lady: "Miss Wakefield, Mr Morton left you his money. You cannot find the money. Mrs Seaton knows where it is. The money, we admit, is yours, though in justice it should belong to her. In a word, my dear lady, divide ;" and Mr Slimm leant back in his chair whistling a little air from *Princess Ida*, as if the whole thing was settled to the satisfaction of all parties.'

Mr Carver looked at him as a connoisseur eyes a bad copy of an old master. 'Mr Slimm, I presume you have never seen the lady?'

Mr Slimm shook his head.

'I thought not,' continued Mr Carver. 'You have been all over the world, and in the course of your rambles I presume you have seen the Sphinx?—Very good. Now, I do not suppose it ever struck you as a good idea to interview that curiosity, or to sit down before its stony charms with a view to learning its past history and the date of its birth.—No? The idea is too absurd; but I may venture to say, without exceeding the bounds of professional caution, that you are just as likely to get any display of emotion from Miss Wakefield—and indeed, the wonderful stone is much the more pleasant object—'

'But she is not so very awful, Mr Carver,' Eleanor interposed.

'My dear, I know she is not endowed with venomous fangs, though she has the wisdom of the serpent. I am prepared to do anything for you in any shape or form, but I do draw the line at Miss Wakefield. As regards interviewing her upon such a subject, I must respectfully but firmly decline.'

'Surely you don't object to such a course being

taken?' Edgar asked eagerly. 'There is no particular harm in it.'

'On the contrary, I think it is the right course to adopt; but I do not propose to be the victim,' said Mr Carver drily. 'If any one in this select company has some evil to atone for, and wants a peculiarly torturing penance, let him undertake the task.'

Felix looked at Mr Bates; Edgar looked at his wife, and each waited politely and considerately for the others to speak. It is not often one meets such pure disregard of self in this grasping world. However, the task must be done; and as Mr Carver disclaimed it, and Bates had no interest in the affair, moreover, Eleanor not being expected to volunteer, manifestly the work lay before the American, Edgar, or Felix.

The American, like another Curtius, was prepared to fling himself into the gulf. With characteristic and national modesty, he merely waited willing to yield the van of battle; but the delicacy of the others left him no alternative. He volunteered to go.

'I am a man of few words,' he said, 'and I guess I am about calculated to fill the vacancy. I am alone in the world, and if I fail to return, there will be no dear one to mourn the loss. I have one little favour to ask before I go, and that is, in case the worst happens, to spare me an epitaph. You will think of me sometimes; and when you sit round your winter firesides and the wind is howling in the naked trees'—Here he waved his hands deprecatingly towards the company, as if praying them to spare his emotions.

Mr Carver's eyes twinkled at this tirade. 'Well, that is settled then,' he said. 'The sooner you go the better. Shall we say to-morrow?—Very good. The address is 34 Cedar Road, Hampstead.'

'It is well,' said the victim to friendship. 'Before I quit you once and for ever, I should like to break the bread of joviality once more; for the last time, I should like to look upon the wine when it is red. To drop the language of metaphor, I invite you all to lunch with me at the *Holborn*.'

It was left, then, in Mr Slimm's hands to consummate what he denominated as 'working the oracle.'

'What do you think of my dream, now?' Eleanor asked her husband as they walked home together.

'Your "Argosy with golden sails?"' queried Edgar. 'Well, I am beginning to think it may come into port after all.'

Like the 'condemned man' of the penny-a-liner, Mr Slimm passed a good night, and the thought of the task he had undertaken did not deter him from making a hearty and substantial breakfast. Without so much as a tremor, he ordered a cab, and sped away northwards on his diplomatic errand.

Cedar Road may, without any great stretch of imagination, be termed dingy. It is not the dinginess of the typical London street, but a jaunty kind of grimness, a grimness which knows itself to be grimy, but swaggers with a pretension of spick-and-span cleanliness; a sort of place which makes one think of that cheap

gentility which wears gaudy apparel and unclean linen, or no linen at all. I may better explain my meaning by saying that the majority of the houses were black with smoke, and yet, singularly enough, the facings of light stone at the corners had preserved their natural colour, and each house was adorned by a veranda painted a staring green, which stood out in ghastly contrast to the fog-stained fronts. Every house had a little grass plot—called, by a stretch of courtesy, the lawn—fronting it. It was presumably of grass, because it was vegetation of some kind, but about as much like the genuine article as London milk resembles the original lacteal fluid. In the centre of each 'lawn' was an oval flower-bed, tenanted by some hardy annuals, bearing infinitesimal blooms of a neutral tint. Each house was approached by a flight of steps rising from the road, which gentle ascent served to keep the prying gaze of the vulgar from peering too closely into the genteel seclusion of the dining-rooms. Every house was the counterpart of its neighbour, each having the same sad-coloured curtains and wire-blinds on the ground-floor, the same cheap muslins at the drawing-room windows, and the same drawn blinds, surmounted with brass rods, to the bedrooms. A canary likewise hung in a painted cage in every drawing-room window; No. 34 boasting in addition a stagnant-looking aquarium, containing three torpid goldfish in extremely dirty water.

After three peals of the bell, each outrivalling its predecessor in volume, which is not saying much for the bell-metal at No. 34, Mr Slimm was answered. Through the fragile door he had distinctly heard the sounds of revelry within, and acquired the information that some mystic *Melissa* was 'tidying,' and therefore *Tilda* must transform herself for the nonce into the slave of the bell. By the petulant expression on *Tilda's* face, the errand was not particularly pleasant to her.

In answer to his query, the misanthropic *Tilda* vouchsafed the information that Miss Wakefield was in, adding, that he had better come this way; which siren summons he lost no time in obeying, and was thus introduced into the seclusion of Miss Wakefield's chamber. Inquiring his name with a snap, and having obtained the desired information, the bewitching *Tilda* disappeared, and apparently appeared to be singing some sort of ditty in a crescendo voice at the foot of the stairs; the fact of the case being that Miss Wakefield was summoned *vivid voce*; her part of the conversation being inaudible, and the voice of the charmer being perfectly distinct to the visitor, the song running something after this fashion: 'Miss Wakefield'—um, um, 'wanted, mum'—um, um. 'A man, please'—um, um, um. 'Rather tall (very distinctly)—um. 'No; he is not a gentleman'—um, um, um.—'All right, miss.' And then she reappeared with the information that Miss Wakefield would be down at once.

The space of time mentioned having resolved itself into a quarter of an hour, Mr Slimm was enabled to complete his plan of campaign, not that he anticipated any resistance—in which deduction he was decidedly wrong—but because he thought it best to be quite prepared with his story, and in a position to receive the enemy in

good and compact order. By the time he had done this, and taken a mental inventory of all the furniture in the room—not a violent effort of memory—the door opened, and Miss Wakefield entered.

#### A FEW WORDS ON SALMON ANGLING.

SALMON anglers as a class are shrewd and observant; many of them are men of education; not a few are men of distinction in literature, science, and art; and certainly few follow the business of their lives with such an ardent zeal, watching and calculating all the chances of success; yet, strangely enough, the anglers of to-day know little more than was known generations ago as to the habits of the fish, and how or when they are most likely to succeed in capturing them. It is asserted that the salmon fly is essentially the same lure as was used two centuries ago; and despite the great increase of anglers and the ready reward that awaits any improvement that an inventor might produce, no lure has been devised at all equal to the so-called fly; for, be it remembered, there is no consensus of opinion amongst anglers as to what this lure appears to be, to the eye of the salmon. All are agreed that it resembles no living insect, though some hold that it must be taken for an insect, from the opening and shutting of the wings caused by the play of the rod; others argue that its appearance is that of the shrimp as it moves in the water; while some maintain that it is an unmistakable minnow in appearance, and particularly in its movements. Against the minnow theory it is said: 'Why do not salmon prefer the natural or the artificial minnow, the latter of which even, is so much more like the real fish?' To this it is argued that the motion of the fly is much more minnow-like than either of these lures, while the wings are closely held in minnow-like shape in the heavy currents where salmon are commonly found, let the rod be played as it may. In some rivers, few salmon can be induced to take any lure, and in many rivers the majority of those fish never rise to a fly; but we doubt if any man yet knows the cause thereof.

On the other hand, there are frequent examples of salmon rising most determinedly several times in rapid succession, and each time giving a tug at the fly; and there are cases, as we know personally, in which both fly and worm hooks have been struck into the fish's mouth, the line broken, and the same fish caught by the same angler a few minutes later with a similar lure, and brought to bank with the two severed hooks in its mouth. Such an example shows that some salmon feed greedily at times. It also seems to disprove another theory advanced by many men—namely, that salmon feed so rarely in fresh waters, that it is only an idle freak when they rise to a glittering moving lure. Whether there are different breeds of salmon in our British rivers, we do not know; but certainly there are decided variations, some being markedly short and deep compared with others, and some reddening and becoming more spotted in fresh water; but whether some kinds of fish are more 'taking' than others, we know nothing.

Salmon flies are much more carefully and artistically 'dressed' now than they were in

former times. The gayest and the grayest of birds are hunted down to supply feathers for this purpose—gold and silver pheasants, the bustards and jungle-cocks of India, the ostrich of Africa, the wood-ducks of North America, the great owls and hawks of equatorial and arctic regions, peacocks, guinea-fowls, chanticleers and drakes of the poultry-yard, and above all turkeys, brown, gray, and white, often carefully bred to colour for this particular purpose—all are made subservient to the salmon angler's thirst for fine feathers. The cost of materials seems of small account, two or three guineas being frequently given for a fine skin of the golden pheasant.

Hooks, though finer made and of better steel, are not very different in shape from those in use some two thousand years ago, as may be seen in those got from Pompeii, now in the museum at Naples. But in variety of fine feathers, in silks and wools of wondrous dyes, in gold and silver tinsels, and in the great manipulating skill now devoted to the production of salmon flies, there must have been advances. Many of these lures are jewel-like enough to be worn as bonnet and dress ornaments by ladies of fashion; and looking into a well-stocked angling book, one cannot but conclude that any salmon knowing a good thing could not fail to jump at some of the dazzling beauties got up for the delectation of its kind. Certainly many anglers, doting over their favourites, feel that if they were salmon, this or that 'grand fly' would be irresistible. We have heard an old enthusiast assert, as he hurried into a favourite pool, that he had on 'a hook this morning that a fish canna lie below.' And yet the fastidiousness of the fish seems to keep pace with the advances of the angler's art and knowledge. Salmon see more hooks and lures, and possibly get to know them better; and so all the fine rods, reels, lines, and lures do not insure even the raising of a salmon, be the day and the river never so promising and the angler charming never so wisely.

To an outsider, it must often be a huge joke to see a party of salmon anglers mounted cap-a-pie with such a wealth of fishing paraphernalia—silver-mounted rods and reels, creels of vast dimensions, waterproof coats, wading boots and 'breeks,' luncheon-bags and landing-nets equally capacious, and great telescopic-mounted gaffs of glittering steel and brass, formidable-looking enough to grapple a seal—marching down the glen with their gillies in the morning; and marching back again at night without having turned a scale on a salmon's back, though the fish were tumbling about the pools like porpoises, and so plentiful, that had Donald only thrown in the big gaff, he could hardly have failed to hook a thumper in hauling it back again.

Many anglers are prone to speak with confidence as to what conditions of water and weather are favourable for salmon rising, and what sorts of flies are most suitable for these varying conditions; but experienced anglers are least likely to speak with assurance on such points. It is amusing enough to hear with what perceptions fish are credited as to coming changes of weather, and the like; and one is apt to wonder how they in the river know so much more of the outer atmosphere, and 'what fools these mortals be' who live in it and can tell so little. There are points

on which there is some agreement; but if laid down as rules, it must be stated that these have so many exceptions, that it is about as difficult for the average man to draw reliable conclusions from them as from 'the weather-glass.' Salmon rise best to the fly when there is a little colour in the water; when skies are clouded; when the air is clear rather than muggy; when weather is cold rather than warm; in a falling rather than a rising river; where waters flow sharply; and in comparatively shallow pools or parts thereof, rather than in deep water. When to this it is added that the more coloured or the rougher the water and the larger the river, the larger and brighter the fly that should be used, most of what is really known is summed up, leaving a wide field for further investigation, a field that has been long and all but fruitlessly cultivated.

At times, for days together, not a salmon can be induced to rise; another day comes in which salmon are got 'all along the line'; and not an angler can assign any reliable reason for this change, though many of them may profess to do so. Anglers may fish a salmon pool for hours without getting a rise; yet at some other hour, several salmon may be caught; but whether the cause lies in the state of the atmosphere, the light, or the moving of fish in the pool, all the combined wisdom of anglers is nought but foolishness there aenent. Again, a salmon may be got by a less skilled angler fishing immediately behind a redoubtable fisherman; but whether it was the particular hook that caught the eye of the fish, its particular movement at the moment, the accidental proximity of the fish, or all these temptations combined, what man can tell? It seems certain that salmon often follow a hook or watch it from their 'lie' without rising to it; and undoubtedly at times their decision 'to fight or flee' is determined by the motion of the lure at the critical moment. Anglers often observe that their hook is suddenly seized when the motion of the rod was stopped, or when, after hanging still for a few seconds, it was moved. The fly is frequently taken when it sinks deeply from a slack line; sometimes when in the act of sinking, and sometimes when it is being raised slowly, as by the winding of the reel; and at other times when the angler, stumbling over rough stones, accidentally jerks about his hook. A salmon frequently rushes to the surface after a fly that is being quickly drawn up for a fresh cast, and others take a fly when being dragged slowly up stream by the angler walking along the bank. Some salmon take the fly with a grand rush. We have seen a large fish dash half-way across a pool, with its dorsal cutting the water for several yards ere it seized the swift retreating fly. Others take it slowly, as by suction.

Anglers are untiring in the discussion of the merits of their various flies—Parsons, Silver Doctors, Sweeps, Durbar Rangers, Jock Scotts, &c. Yet salmon are frequently caught by what most anglers would call very unlikely flies, after declining to grapple the gayest and best. So great is this uncertainty, that many anglers maintain it is of little consequence what the fly is, if it is only well presented to a salmon

when in a rising mood. Salmon have been caught in all kinds of weather—in calm and in thunderstorm ; in rain and in brilliant sunshine ; under white and under black clouds ; with winds blowing from all points of the compass—though south and west seem best ; even at times in sharp frosty mornings. They have been often caught with small hooks in turbid waters, and vice versa. We have seen a twenty-pounder rise to a number two trout fly so small that one might suppose such a mite could never be tasted in such a mouth, and yet the salmon rose to it like a porpoise, though in a very small crystal-clear river and under a dazzling noonday sun. As to the play of the rod in salmon angling, fish are taken under all fashions—fast and slow, short or long lifting ; while some successful fishermen trust more to the current making the play, and move their rods very slightly. We have seen an angler kill two large salmon and lose a third in quick succession by standing in one spot and holding his rod quite still. One piece of reliable good advice we can give to those who have not already learned it. Though an angler in a general way can form a notion as to what are the likely parts of a river, it is only by repeated observations that some of the best 'lies' are found out ; and as there are favourite 'lies' occupied all the year round, and year after year, by the finest river-trout, sea-trout, and salmon, it is best to observe where the anglers who have long frequented a river, fish most persistently, as there the fish will certainly be found.

Salmon anglers—unlike trout anglers—should make few casts, should cast the line lightly, playing the fly quietly and persistently over the best parts of the pools only, and not wasting time over unknown water. Nothing so certainly diminishes his chances of a 'rise,' as recklessly wading where he may be seen by the fish, or casting his line heavily, and lifting it often and hurriedly.

#### B U T T E R I N E.

PROFESSOR SHELDON, at the great show of the British Dairy Farmers' Association, tried to comfort some of those present by telling them that there was a great future for dairy-farming in this country. Whilst corn-growing was doomed in England, the consumption of fresh milk was increasing—it had trebled in London within the last twenty years. Both cheese and butter ought to be consumed in much greater quantities, for there was no article of food so cheap as cheese. He had no objection to butterine ; only, let it be sold as such.

At the annual meeting of the same society, presided over by Lord Vernon, Canon Bagot introduced the subject of butterine, the extended use and manufacture of which is already pressing heavily on the dairy-farmer. He said he did not want to stop the sale of butterine ; but he wanted the law so altered, that persons should be imprisoned, instead of being fined, for selling butterine as butter. He gave a bit of personal experience. He said he had disguised some of the Dublin dairymaids and sent them to purchase butter in eight shops. In every case, a receipt was given to the effect that the butter

was pure ; but on being analysed, it was found that there was not a particle of butter in any of the samples. One of these tradesmen had been fined five times for selling butterine as butter ! A motion which he moved was carried—'That the Council be requested to take into consideration the best means of prohibiting the sale of butterine as butter, and that they immediately take such steps as were desirable.'

Lord Vernon added his testimony as to the unfairness of retailing butterine for butter and selling it at one-and-sixpence a pound. He had seen enormous quantities of butterine in Paris, but there it was sold as such. About a month previously, he had been asked by a man to turn his dairy-farm into a butterine factory, by which he hoped to make ten thousand pounds a year.

Under the title of 'Sham Butter,' in *Chambers's Journal* for May 15, 1880, the discovery and manufacture of butterine were briefly related. An ingenious Frenchman, M. Mége, patented a process by which beef-suet can be converted into butterine, and since then the manufacture has spread till we have factories at work in France, England, Holland, Germany, and America. In a Report laid before the House of Commons, it was declared that the substances so produced were harmless, and that good butterine was more wholesome than bad butter. In considering the subject, it must be remembered that there is good and bad butterine, as well as good and bad butter.

Oleo-margarine is the raw material from which butterine is made. It is procured in this way : From the freshly slaughtered carcasses of cattle in the abattoirs of large towns, the superfluous portions of suet are taken to the butterine factories. The finest, cleanest, and sweetest portions only are selected for making oleo-margarine. This prepared oil is largely exported from America to Holland, whence it comes over to us as butterine.

A scientific periodical describes the process of manufacture as follows. At the factory, the beef-suet is thrown into tanks containing tepid water ; and after standing a short time it is washed repeatedly in cold water, and disintegrated and separated from fibre by passing it through a 'meat-hasher,' worked by steam, after which it is forced through a fine sieve. It is then melted by surrounding the tanks with water at a temperature of about one hundred and twenty degrees Fahrenheit. Great care is taken not to exceed this point ; otherwise, the fat would begin to decompose and acquire a flavour of tallow. After being well stirred, the adipose membrane subsides to the bottom of the tank, and is separated under the name of 'scrap,' whilst a clear yellow oil is left above, together with a film of white oily substance. This film is removed by skimming, and the yellow oil is drawn off and allowed to solidify. The 'refined fat,' as the substance is now termed, is then taken to the pressroom—which is kept at a temperature of about ninety degrees Fahrenheit—packed in cotton cloths, and placed in galvanised iron plates in a press. On being subjected to pressure, oil flows away. The cakes of stearine which remain are sent to the candle-makers. The oil—which is now known as oleo-margarine—is filled into barrels for sale or export, or directly

made into butterine by adding to it ten per cent. of milk and churning the mixture. It is now coloured with annatto and rolled with ice, to set it; salt is added; the process is finished, and it is ready for packing.

Holland has taken the lead in the manufacture of butterine; there are now forty-five factories in the country, most of which are in North Brabant, where the farms are small, and maintain but one or two cows. As the farmers there can only make a small quantity of butter, which is apt to spoil before it can be collected for market, they readily make contracts with the butterine-makers. The factories at Oss, in Holland, alone, send an average of one hundred and fifty tons per week of oleo-margarine butter to England. There are also several firms in this country engaged in its manufacture; one firm in London can turn out from ten to twenty tons per week.

Professor Mayer in 1883 made some experiments as to the digestibility and wholesomeness of butterine as compared with dairy butter. The experiments were made on two healthy male subjects; and the conclusion arrived at was, that there is not much difference between the digestibility of butterine and that of dairy butter. As to eggs or germs existing in butterine, whereby disease may be spread, there is as yet, happily, no instance on record. As far as nutritive qualities go, it stands on very nearly the same level as butter.

We learn that an Act was passed, April 24, 1884, by the Senate of New York prohibiting the fabrication of any article out of margarine substances, intended to replace butter and cheese. A fine of one hundred dollars is attached to the breaking of the Act. In the preliminary inquiry made by a Committee, it is stated that twenty out of the thirty samples bought as dairy butter were proved to be butterine. The quantity of butterine manufactured and sent into the State of New York was estimated at forty million pounds annually. The ordinary butter, except the very best grades, was spoken of as rapidly disappearing from the market. One witness testified that something between one hundred and fifty and two hundred thousand packages of butterine, of fifty-five pounds each, were shipped at New York in 1882; and between two hundred and two hundred and fifty thousand packages in 1883. Another witness said that the gross receipts of the genuine butter-trade in New York are fifty per cent. less than what they would be but for the sale of butterine as butter.

The passing of this Act is virtually a granting of protection for the American dairy industry, and gives effect to the voice of so far interested parties. Butterine has fared much better at the hands of scientific men. Sir Lyon Playfair, Sir Frederick J. Bramwell, Sir F. Abel, Dr James Bell, and others, none of whom are in any way interested in its manufacture, have given a favourable verdict regarding butterine, looking upon it as a boon to the working population. Dr James Bell, in a paper read at the International Health Exhibition, said that butterine and oleo-margarine are, in the opinion of high authorities, legitimate articles of commerce, when honestly sold, and if made in a cleanly manner from sound fats, as they afford the poor a cheap and useful substitute for butter,

especially during the winter months, when good butter is both scarce and dear.

Professor Odling, who presided at a meeting of the London Society of Arts, when a paper was read by Mr Anton Jurgens, in December 1884, on this subject, is of the same opinion. Mr Jurgens said that the total exports from Holland alone, in 1883, amounted to about forty thousand tons, valued at about three million pounds sterling. The greatest care was taken in its manufacture to promote cleanliness and excellence. No tainted fat could possibly be used: the smallest portion of bad fat would contaminate the whole mass. The *Lancet* has said that butterine is better and cheaper than much of the common butter sold. Mr Jurgens is of the same opinion; and he also said that, owing to its composition, butterine does not become rancid, but retains its sweetness longer than butter. This was owing to the absence of butyryl, which gives the aroma to fresh butter, but causes it soon to become rank.

Dr Mouton says that the Dutch manufacturers strongly desire to have this product imported under its own name, and he questions whether a single package is introduced under a false one. Dutch butterine, when made from the best materials, cannot easily be distinguished from dairy butter; but when made from bad materials, it is easily discerned, and no consumer could be imposed upon by it. He says further, that the English market is the most particular one with which they have to deal. Denmark is the only European state where particular regulations are in force with regard to the manufacture, sale, and import of butterine. In France, a bill for this purpose has been drafted; in the other European states, the import of margarine and butterine seems to be considered as a public boon.

Time, which tests all things, will also test butterine. Professor Odling, speaking as a physician, says that a cheap and inexpensive fat is a great want with many young children, and that butterine supplies this want. We find that butterine can be sold at a profit, for the different qualities, at from eighteenpence to one-and-fourpence per pound. When, as we have already seen, it is made from good materials, it is wholesome and nourishing; and considering the demands of our vast population in this respect—our imports of butter and butterine last year amounting in value to twelve and a half millions sterling—who shall say that butterine may not have a useful future before it? Let it, however, be called butterine, and honestly sold as such.

#### THAT FATAL DIAMOND.

##### A THIEF'S CONFESSION.

I AM the most unhappy man that ever occupied a prison cell. I say this advisedly, knowing that hundreds are at this moment bewailing their fate, which in many cases may seem harder than mine; but it is not, if they still retain the self-respect which I have lost. That's what tortures me; my *prestige* is gone; I am degraded in my own eyes; I despise myself as heartily as the most virtuous man in the world could. That I, to whom half the thieves in London have looked for guidance, should myself have laid a plot for

myself and walked into it! It is too humiliating! To fall a victim to a too powerful combination of adverse circumstances is no disgrace; to be outwitted by the superior finesse of the police is hard, but endurable; but to fall into a snare which should not have misled a boy who had never stolen so much as a handkerchief in his life—this, this is shame!

It was that diamond ring that did it. I really think some special ill-luck must have attached to the trinket, for it brought no good to its previous possessor. It was hardly in the regular way of business that it came into my hands—just as it has escaped from them in a most unbusiness-like fashion. That young man must have been in great straits before he united himself to me in the business of stealing his uncle's cash-box, in order to obtain funds to pay his gambling debts. It was a very easy matter for me. He was to mix a few drops of an opiate I gave him with his relative's brandy-and-water one evening, and leave the hall-door open; I had only to walk in and take up the booty he had collected and placed ready for me. It was a very fair collection of plate that awaited me as well as the coveted cash-box; but I am fond of jewellery, and the house was so beautifully asleep, that I could not resist creeping up to the master's bedroom to see if there was not in it a trifle worth picking up. There was—the diamond ring, and a rather good set of studs. I took them, and slipped out of the room so quietly that I should not have disturbed their owner, even if my young friend had not, by way of making sure, doubled the prescribed dose of the opiate, and thereby plunged his uncle into, not sleep, but death. Poor young fellow! the knowledge that he had killed a relation who had always treated him with kindness, if also with severity, was too much for his mind, which doubtless was never strong. Those debts of honour were never paid; he never came to claim his share of that night's spoil; and I have heard that the distant cousin who, failing him, inherited the old man's property, grumbles greatly at having to pay for his being kept in a lunatic asylum.

This is cowardice on my part. I have condemned myself, as the fitting punishment of my folly, to set down in black and white the way in which I entrapped myself, and I am postponing the task to maunder over an irrelevant incident.

The ring had not been long in my possession when I paid the unlucky visit to Paris which began my misfortunes. The London police were very active just then, and business was in consequence dull and risky, so, I thought I might take a holiday and enjoy a fortnight in the city of pleasure. I was pretty well known at home; but I had not, so far as I knew, a single enemy in France, and I did not intend to make any. For a fortnight I would be a mere innocent pleasure-seeker, taking the day's amusements as they came, and making no effort after either my own gain or others' loss. Such was my intention; but alas! what intention, especially if it be a good one, can withstand the force of the habits of a lifetime? Mine gave way, and speedily.

One evening, a pleasant April evening, I formed one of the crowd that surrounded the

platform at an open-air concert. By my side was standing a stout and elderly man, whom, from a score of tiny indications, I guessed to be a British holiday-maker. 'There's from fifteen to twenty pounds in his coat-pocket, I'll be bound,' thought I. 'He is far too cautious to leave his money at his hotel, where Frenchmen, whom he regards as all thieves, may lay hands on it, so he carries it about with him, thinking that on his person it cannot fail to be safe.' The idea of undressing him in this particular was too tempting; I found myself smiling in anticipation at the bewildered and horror-struck expression his face would wear when he discovered his loss. It was the humour of the thing that touched me. That fatal gift of humour, which has ruined so many honest men, led me to my destruction. Deep in my soul, beneath the outer garb of the man of the world I was wearing, dwelt the instincts of the professional pickpocket. Almost unconsciously I inserted my left hand (we are all ambidexter in our profession) in his pocket and gently drew out a pocket-book—the very sort of pocket-book I knew he would carry. I edged away from my victim as soon as the little operation was over, and disentangling myself from the interested auditors who were listening to a gaily-dressed damsel shrieking with the remains of a once powerful voice, I soon found myself walking along the brightly lighted boulevard. I had not gone far before I noticed that the diamond ring which I constantly wore on the third finger of my left hand, was missing. It was a little too large for me; but I had not thought it advisable to have the size altered just yet; and the result was that it had slipped from my finger. I knew that I wore it when I left my hotel; but I could not recollect noticing its presence at any subsequent time; so I went to every place I had visited since I came out, the café where I had dined, the shop where I had bought some cigars, the streets I had traversed, looking everywhere for some trace of my lost jewel, and inquiring of every one to whom I had previously spoken if they had seen anything of it. I felt a dreary conviction that my treasured ornament was gone for ever, when, as a last resource, I went to a *bureau de police*, and gave a description of the lost ring to the officer there. The officer was polite, but gave me small hope of ever seeing my diamond again. I gave it up as gone for ever.

I was sitting in my hotel dull and depressed, angry at my own carelessness, and inclined to give up any further holiday, and forget my annoyance by a speedy return to my professional duties in London, when my friend of the police-office entered.

'I am happy,' he said, bowing politely and smiling with, as I thought, anticipation of a handsome reward—'I am happy to inform monsieur that we hope soon to place his ring in his hands. One answering to the description you gave was brought to our office by the finder, a countryman of your own. The ring being rather an uncommon one, I felt assured that it could be no other than the one you had lost. You described it, I think, as consisting of five diamonds set in the shape of a violet, with a smaller brilliant in the centre—a very curious and valuable jewel.'

'Yes, that's it,' I replied curtly, wondering

why he could not give me back my property without so many words.

'Then I may safely assume that this is the ring in question?' He brought out my ring from his pocket and showed it to me.

'It is,' I said, stretching out my hand; but he did not restore the jewel, only stood there, holding it and smiling more than ever. I supposed that he wanted to see some sign of the reward he expected to receive before parting with the trinket. I took out my purse, and opening it, made some remark about showing my appreciation of his honesty; but he shook his head, smiling, if possible, more broadly than before.

'Do you not wish to know, monsieur, how your ring was found?' he asked, with a leer which I thought was disagreeable.

'Well, how was it found?' I said tartly.

My policeman drew himself up to deliver his great effect. 'Monsieur, your ring was found in another man's pocket!' I stared at him in bewilderment, mingled with an indefinite fear, while he continued his narrative in a less courteous and more confidential tone than he had hitherto assumed. 'Ah! mon ami, one may be too clever; one's dexterity may lead one astray if it be not balanced by discretion. You had not long left the office, when another Englishman came in complaining that he had lost a pocket-book containing all his money. He had put his hand in his pocket to bring it out, meaning to pay for something, but found it gone, and in its place a diamond ring—your ring. For my own part, I do not doubt your honesty—even your generosity. You believed, doubtless, that exchange is not robbery, and that, in leaving your ring in exchange for his *porte-monnaie*, you would at once obtain a memento of a compatriot and do him a practical benefit. That is the interpretation I should wish to put on the affair; but the owner of the pocket-book will not see it in that light—he lacks imagination, as so many English do. Of course, your coming to ask us to try to recover your lost ring tends to give colour to his version of the matter, which is, that while you were robbing him of his money, the ring slipped from your hand, and remained in his pocket; and with a lack of sympathy for a countryman, which I grieve to recount, he demands that you should be arrested, a duty which I am reluctantly compelled to fulfil.'

I was absolutely dumb with surprise and anger. Had I had my wits about me, I might—though circumstances were against me—have brought some counter-charge of theft against my accuser; but I was so stupefied by the strange turn events had taken, that I submitted meekly to be searched, to have the fatal pocket-book taken from me, and to be led away to prison. Somehow, too, I was unable to secure possession of the ring that was the cause of my undoing, and I have not seen it since my arrest.

So here I sit in my cell, depressed and weary, a victim to the bitterest self-reproach. I could almost wish to be condemned to lifelong imprisonment, for what is freedom worth to me? After such a piece of suicidal folly as I have been guilty of, I shall never dare to lift up my head among my professional brethren, and I fear that nothing will be left for me but to take to honesty when my term expires.

#### FISH-CULTURE.

Elaborate arrangements have been made at the establishments of the National Fish-culture Association for hatching the ova of all kinds of fish this year. For some time past, agents have been employed in spawning fish and collecting the eggs from various rivers and streams, and a considerable number have already been deposited in the Hatchery at South Kensington for incubation. The American government have intimated their intention to forward very large consignments of ova from the various species of salmonidae abounding in the waters of the United States, including the white-fish (*Coregonus albus*), which, owing to the success attending their propagation in this country during 1855, will be hatched out in large numbers. As soon as the fry are in a fit condition, they will be located in the waters at the Delaford Park Establishment, belonging to the Association, whence they will be distributed in Scottish and other lakes. It is intended by the Association to increase the range of their operations, and bestow further attention upon the culture of 'coarse' fish, which will necessitate an extension of the Fishery at Delaford. In 1855 numerous presentations of salmonidae were made to public waters in the United Kingdom, but only those fish were selected that are desirable for the purposes of replenishing depleted *locales*. The various fish, both American and English, reared at the beginning of last year by the Association are thriving well, and it can be fairly said that great success has crowned all the endeavours put forward to increase the numerical proportions of our fish and improve their multifarious species.

#### TWO SONNETS.

##### KEATS.

O PURBLIND world! Not seldom in the years  
You find your hero in some man despised,  
Some martyr whom you slew, too lightly prized,  
And bathe the corse in vain unheeded tears.  
Too late your wisdom; for the lost one hears  
No longer or contumely or praise:  
On kinder death in weariness he lays  
His head, forgetting all that life endears.  
And this one, on whose lips the altar coal  
Of inspiration burned; within whose soul  
The fire of the eternal lived, and wrought  
Your baser dross to bars of golden thought;  
Oh, how you scorned him! Now, in reverent wise,  
The weakest murmur of his lips you prize.

And thou, strong soul in a weak body pent,  
Spirit of Keats! It was not thine to know  
In thy brief span the joy, the generous glow  
Of common praise and common wonderment.  
But wearying until the clarion breath,  
The voice of fame, should fix thy name among  
Immortals, came the murmur soft as song,  
As sad as thine—the summoning of death.  
O sorrow that the deaf world would not hear  
Such music, the enchantment of all time,  
Until the singer, leaving the sublime,  
The orphic song half sung, had fled its sphere!  
Too late, too late, our tardy honours now,  
Wreathing vain laurel on thy calm dead brow.  
GEORGE L. MOORE.

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